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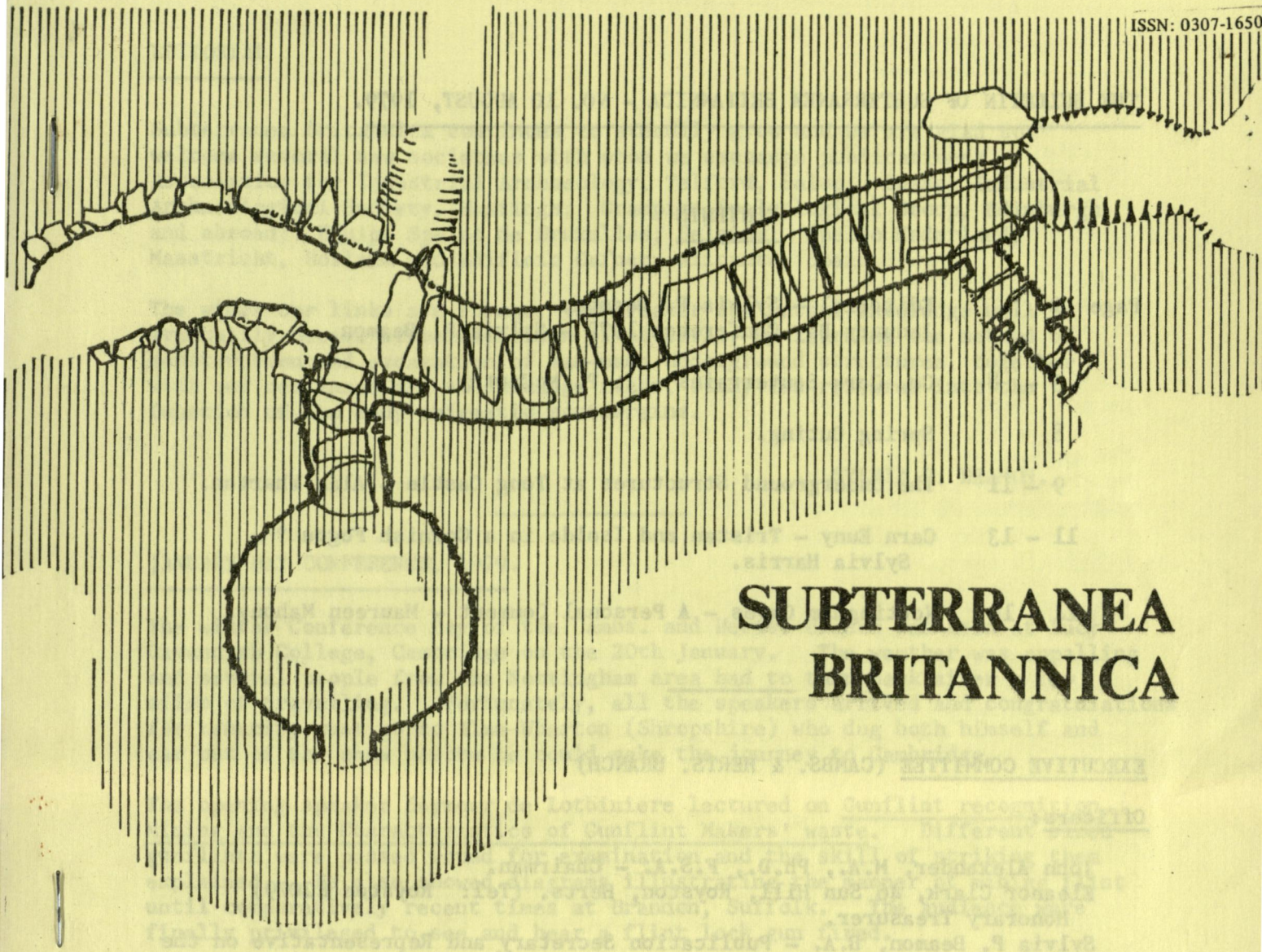

SUBTERRANEA BRITANNICA

Bulletin No. 10

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Bulletin compiled by Sylvia P. Beamon.

EDITORIAL

Subterranea Britannica continues to steadily grow and we are glad to welcome several new societies with whom we exchange publications; Association for Industrial Archaeology, Telford, Salop; Sussex Industrial Archaeological Society, Hastings; Grampian Speleological Group, Edinburgh; and abroad; Equipe Speleo de Bruxelles, Belgium; Speleo Nederland, Maastricht, Holland and Edificio Gafner, Alicante, Spain.

The wider our links are formed, the greater our mutual knowledge will eventually become with comparison of material, by learning the method of construction and excavation of man-made underground structures, together with our continued aim to exchange ideas, study and research into the function of the many enigmatic souterrains.

SYLVIA P. BEAMON.

JANUARY DAY CONFERENCE, 1979.

The winter Conference Day of the Cambs. and Herts. Branch was held at Lucy Cavendish College, Cambridge on the 20th January. The weather was appalling and several people from the Nottingham area had to turn back after a few miles of travelling. Fortunately, all the speakers arrived and congratulations for tenacity must go to Alan Wharton (Shropshire) who dug both himself and car out of the snow before he could make the journey to Cambridge.

The opening speaker Seymour de Lotbiniere lectured on Gunflint recognition, Mining and the Characteristics of Gunflint Makers' waste. Different sized gunflints were passed round for examination and the skill of striking them explained. He also showed diagrams illustrating the manner of mining flint until comparatively recent times at Brandon, Suffolk. The audience were finally privileged to see and hear a flint lock gun fired.

Alan Aberg, of the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments spoke on Records. This is a subject of considerable concern for Subterranea Britannica and Dr. Aberg's comments were most lucid and useful.

Alan Wharton, Director of Excavations for the Tong Archaeological Group, Shifnal, Salop, was the first speaker after lunch. The title of his talk was Tong Castle - Life Underground and was illustrated with slides. This is the basis of the article which appears in this Bulletin on page 9.

Before Miss Sylvia Harris spoke on Carn Euny - A Cornish Fogou in a Medieval Romance ? she handed round photostats of portions of the Norse Tristramssaga so that everyone could follow the translations which appear to relate to a souterrain. This is a very interesting idea, see page 11.

The meeting finally closed after tea and discussion.

SYLVIA P. BEAMON.

A NOTE FOR YOUR DIARY

AUTUMN CONFERENCE DAY: The Annual General Meeting to be followed by the Conference has been arranged for Saturday, 20th October, 1979 10 a.m. - 4.30 p.m. and will be held at "Strathaird", Lucy Cavendish College, Cambridge.

CO. CORK SOUTERRAINS

There are three categories of souterrains to be found in the County of Cork of which Duniskey is the most noteworthy example of the Rock-cut category. (In the seventh issue of this Bulletin, January 1978, the author published a report on that souterrain) The other two categories are: 2) Clay-cut, 3) Stone-built. Between July 1975 and June 1977 the author compiled a corpus of souterrains for Cork listing the 460 souterrains recorded in this County between 1777 and 1977. Of that number 150 reports could be accepted as having reasonably accurate descriptions and/or drawings. Using these reports it was possible to identify categories on the basis of the materials of which the sites were made. It was also possible to construct a tentative classification of types. The criteria for this classification - which is to be published - were those of chamber morphology and chamber alignment.(1)

The purpose of this article is twofold; firstly, it presents extracts relevant to the dating of Irish souterrains (2), and secondly it provides the reader with reports on the Stonebuilt and Clay-cut categories.

DATING:

A hoard of Anglo-Saxon coins discovered in a souterrain at Castlefreke, Co. Cork circa 1799 (Nat. Grid W326356) was dispersed but the author through the assistance of Professor Dolley, learnt the present whereabouts of three of these coins. They provide a 10th Century date for coins from an Irish souterrain which paralleled the discovery of coins of the same period in a souterrain at Knowth, Co. Meath. Two of the coins from Castlefreke are now in the British Museum and the third is in the Grosvenor Museum, Chester. The Chester coin is described by Professor Dolley as:

> "a two-line penny of Eadmund of England (939-946) by a moneyer Dorulf. The rosettes above and below the reverse legend clearly assign the coin to a mint in N.W. England and this must surely be Chester where the moneyer is known in the preceding reign. One or two epigraphical details may suggest for the particular coin a date nearer 945 than 940."

He identifies the two in the British Museum as:

> "Two silver pennies of AEthelstan of England (924 - 939) by the Derby moneyer Megenfred or Megenfreth. They are of circumscription type and on both these occurs the Saxon form of the ethnic that is characteristic of Derby coins (cf. British Numismatic Journal XLII 1974, 93 - 4) and one one there actually appears the Derby mint signature. That both pennies emanate from the Derby mint cannot well be doubted."

As there is an absence of coins of Eadred (945 - 946) and of Eadgar (957/9 - 975) the date for the concealment of the hoard is unlikely to be much later than 950 AD. The following extract is our summary of the hoard's implications for the dating of Irish souterrains.

> In 1969 Dr. George Eogan recovered two silver pennies from the primary silt of the 'upper' souterrain excavated in the Hill of Knowth in Co. Meath. One was of AEthelstan (924 - 939) and one of Eadred (946 - 955),

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(1) An unpublished M.A. Thesis on this topic is lodged in the University of Cork.

(2) J. P. McCarthy and Michael Dolley - The Castle Freke (Rathbarry, Co. Cork) find of Tenth-Century Anglo-Saxon Coins', Spink's Numismatic Circular Nov., 1977, pp. 488 - 490.

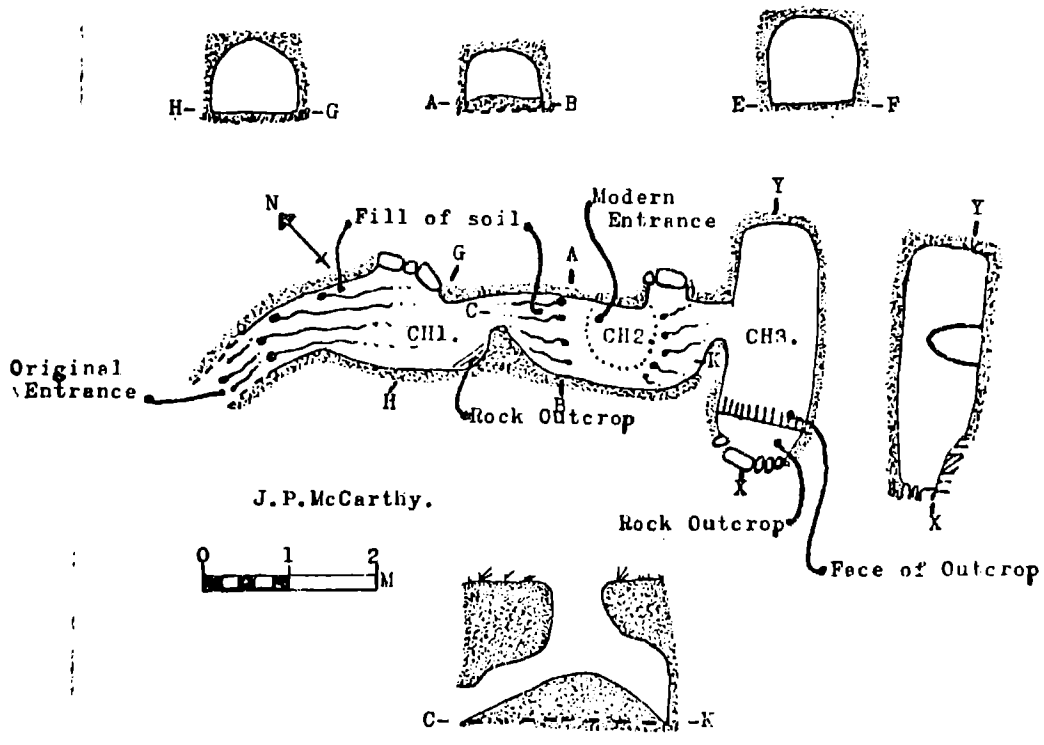
while their condition suggests loss not later than the sixth decade of the tenth Century (cf. British Numismatic Journal XXXVIII (1969), pp.16-21). In other words both findings are essentially of the middle of the tenth Century, and it would seem to follow that some souterrains - but by no means is this to claim all - were in use (and perhaps even being constructed ?) during the period when the decadent eastern line of the Eoghanachtái bore the brunt of the Uí Imhar resurgence. What may not be generally appreciated is how few souterrains produce dating evidence of any description whatsoever. From Co. Cork alone 460 of these structures are on record, and material remains are present in only 57. The majority of these finds, moreover, are of minimal chronological significance either because of their nature (e.g. animal bones and quern-stones) or because of imprecision in the record ('an old crock' etc.). The general pattern for the rest of Ireland is believed to be much the same - though this is not to say that souterrains are distributed equally over the whole country - which makes it perhaps the more remarkable that there should be a third instance of an association with an apparently English artefact. From the souterrain at Mullaroe in Co. Sligo there has come what is described as an Anglo-Saxon glass flasklet, cf. D. B. Harden ed., Dark-Age Britain, London, 1956, p. 154, n. 18, publication of which by Dr. Joseph Raftery must seem a particularly pressing desideratum.

Leaving aside a small scatter of objects seemingly with Late Bronze Age association, relatively few of the datable finds from Irish souterrains appear to fall outside a chronological band extending broadly from the seventh until roughly the fourteenth Century of the Christian era - we may exclude what are certainly secondary deposits of even later date such as the early Elizabethan 'white-money' hoard from Liswatty near Ballyrashane in Co. Derry (cf. British Numismatic Journal XXXVI (1967), pp. 99 and 100) and the late seventeenth Century 'brass-money' hoard from The Doon, Co. Offaly (cf. Journal of the Old Athone Society I, 4 (1974/5), p. 271). Inasmuch as it was already remarkable that so flimsy an element in so vast a body of material should have thrown up two precisely dated coin-finds where concealment may be supposed to have occurred within at most a decade, authoritative comment upon the glass is indeed awaited, even if Dr. Harden's preliminary and very provisional observations may suggest for the manufacture of the object a date no later than the ninth Century.

To return to Castle Freke. This note does not pretend to resolve certain difficulties of a primarily archaeological kind. Neale's 'at the entrance of one of those rude caverns which seem to have been made for the concealment of property in those barbarous ages' is a case in point. Is the entrance the original approach or an internal creepway. Even 'one of those rude caverns' raises problems. Are we to understand a series of interconnecting clay-cut chambers tunnelled into the glacial till which is the type of souterrain most frequently met with in this part of Munster ? It is precisely in this area of the Co. Cork that these clay-cut as opposed to stone-built souterrains are thickest on the ground - on the typologies of souterrains from this region see D. C. Twohig, 'Recent Souterrain Research in Co. Cork', Journal of the Cork Historical and Archaeological Society LXXXI (1976), pp. 19 - 38. Predictably two souterrains discovered in the immediate vicinity of Castle Freke within the last five years both are of the clay-cut type, and the virtual absence of stone-built souterrains from this part of the County must argue very strongly that the 1799 exemplar also was clay-cut. In view of past attempts chronologically to distinguish the two building techniques, it could be thought crucial that the two most closely dated souterrains in a series that runs well into five figures, the one clay-cut and the other stone-built, should appear to belong to one and the same decade.

REPORT OF A CLAY-CUT SOUTERRAIN

Kilcondy: Clay-cut



LOCATION: This site (Nat. Grid. W410674) is located in the vicinity of Macroom, Co. Cork in the townland of Kilcondy. A univallate ringfort is located 150 m. to the N.E. The site was discovered during the ploughing season in 1976 when the ceiling of Chamber 2 collapsed. The site was surveyed in July of that year.

DESCRIPTION: There are three chambers. The ceilings are barrel-vault shape in cross-section. Chamber plans are sub-rectangular. Chamber I has its long axis oriented N.W./S.E. and at its W. end a shaft from floor level slopes gently upwards towards the surface. This is filled with soil. The original entrance to the site appears to have been here. At floor level in the S.E. corner there is an outcrop of bedrock. This has not been worked. In the E. side of the chamber is a dry-stone wall built of water rolled field stones which is 80 cm. wide at its base and has five masonry courses. At the N.E. corner of Chamber I there is a creephole leading into Chamber 2. Due to the collapse of its ceiling the floor of Chamber 2 is covered with soil. This chamber is orientated N.W./S.E. There is a recess in the N. wall which is 30 cm. deep. At the back of this is a dry-stone wall 50 cm. wide by 50 cm. high with three masonry courses. In the N.E. corner is a creephole to Chamber 3. Chamber 3 has its long axis at right-angles to Chamber 2 and it is oriented N.E./S.W. An outcrop of bedrock, which is unworked, occupies the s. end of the chamber. Here the walls and ceiling above the outcrop are excavated to a depth of 40 cm. southward from the face of the outcrop to form a niche at the back of which is a dry-stone wall with three masonry courses. It is 80 cm. wide, 40 cm. high. The outcrop is a slaty sandstone.

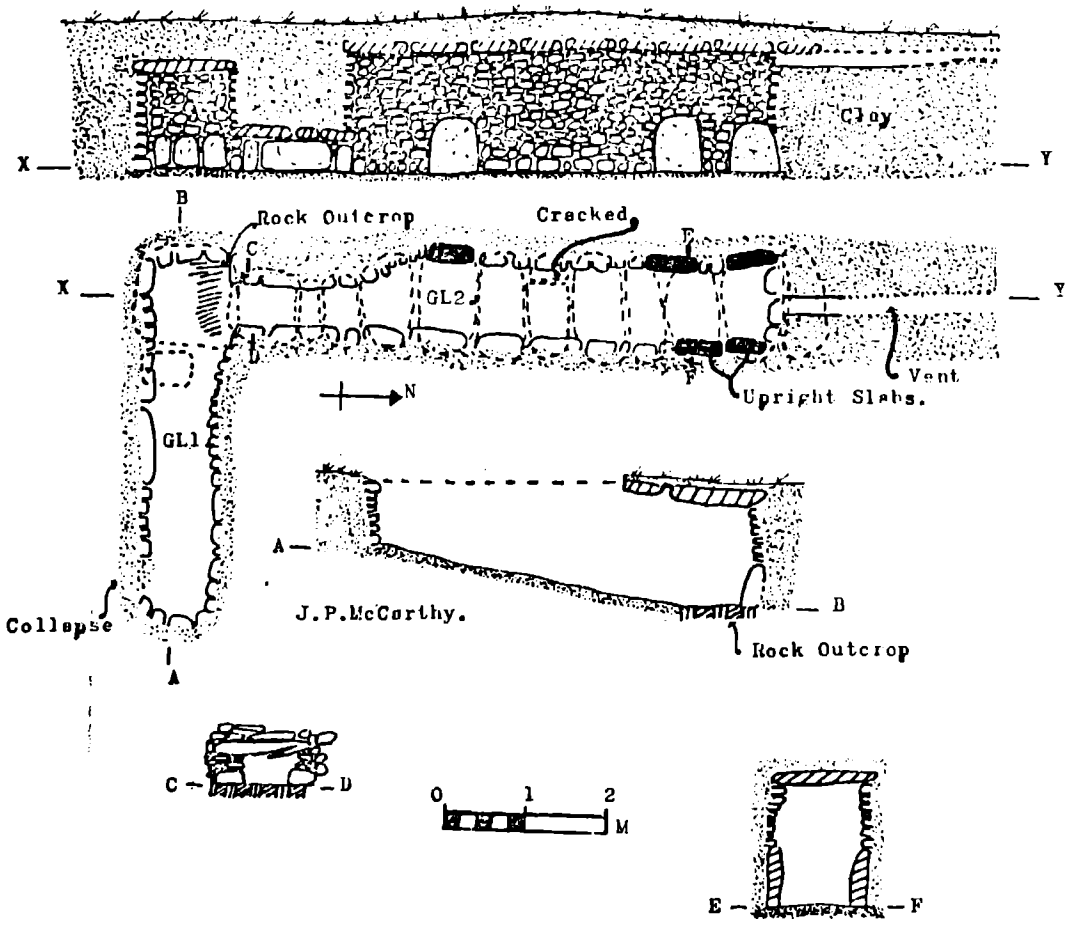
Co. Cork Souterrains (Cont'd)

DIMENSIONS:	Ch. I	Ch. 2	Ch. 3	Creephole Ch. I - 2	Creephole Ch. 2 - 3	Entrance Shaft
Length	1.80 m.	2.25 m.	2.70 m.	0.29 m.	0.25 m.	1.15 m.
Width	0.80 m.	0.90 m.	1.00 m.	0.35 m.	0.40 m.	0.60 m.
Height	0.80 m.	0.80 m.	1.00 m.	0.40 m.	0.60 m.	0.40 m.

FINDS: None

A STONEBUILT SOUTERRAIN

Ballyanly: Stone-built



LOCATION: This site is located in Ballyanly townland (Nat. Grid. W535750) in the vicinity of Inniscarra, Co. Cork. It was not associated with any visible surface structure.

DISCOVERY: 1976. In the course of preparing the site for the construction of a new community centre a mechanical excavator dislodged a capstone and exposed Gallery I. Local inhabitants spurred on by curiosity, within a short period of the discovery removed all the capstones from this gallery excepting that at the W. end. A portion of another capstone was allowed to remain at the S. side. The E. end of the gallery was filled with soil to within 10 cm. beneath the surface of the capstone which was here. The depth of fill decreased westwards from this end to floor level at 1 m. from the W. end of the gallery. The site was investigated by the author in July.

DESCRIPTION: The site consists of two galleries built of drystone masonry and roofed with stone slabs. The long axis of Gallery I is at right-angles to that of Gallery 2 giving the site and overall L-shaped plan. The galleries are connected by a creepway. Gallery I is oriented E.W. The upper portions of the walls are corbelled. The E. and W. ends of the gallery are rounded. Two capstones remain at 10 cm. below the surface of the field at the W. end of the gallery. The one on the E. side has been broken in half and a portion of it remains supported on the S. wall. At the E. end of the gallery, floor level is 80 cm. from the top masonry course. From here it slopes downward and at the W. end it is 1.2 m. Whereas generally the floor of the site is of clay, bedrock is visible on the N. side of the floor here, at the entrance to the creepway. It is not worked. At 2.20 m. from the E. end of the gallery the N. wall has bulged inwards due to the recent disturbance. The foundation courses of the walls contain large boulders and slabs which are positioned at random intervals in the masonry. At the W. end the lower courses consist of three contiguous upright slabs, on average, 40 cm. high. The entrance to the creepway which is at the W. end of the N. wall has a cracked lintel. The creepway sides are stone-lined. The roof consists of three capsones.

Entering Gallery 2 at its S. end the W. side of the creepway curves outward forming the S. end of the gallery which is oriented N.S. The floor is level with the W. end of Gallery I. Large upright stone slabs are incorporated in the walling giving a distinctive feature to the masonry. There are three on the W. side - one at the S. end and two at the N. end. The average dimensions for these are 70 cm. high and 60 cm. wide. Two of these slabs are used at the N. end of the E. wall. The average length of the short axis of the capstones, which number eight, is 60 cm. The N. end of the gallery is rounded.

DIMENSIONS:	Gallery I	Gallery 2	Creepway
Length	4.40 m.	4.90 m.	1.50 m.
Width	0.80 m.	0.90 m.	0.50 m.
Height	0.80 m. at E. 1.20 m. at W.	1.50 m.	0.40 m.

FEATURES: At the N. end of Gallery 2 there is a small opening in the top course of the masonry at the centre of the N. wall. This is the opening to a vent which runs N. for a distance of more than 1.20 m. It is located at approximately 20 cm. below the surface of the field. As far as it is possible to see, the sides are clay-cut and it is roofed with at least one capstone which is approximately the same length as those used for roofing the rest of the gallery. The opening to the vent is 20 cm. wide by 15 cm. high.

FINDS: All of these came from the fill of Gallery I excepting one piece of slag which was found in the floor of Gallery 2. They are:

1) Human skeletal remains - several fragments of a cranium, left and right portions of a lower jawbone with full dentition, and finger bones. There is also a clavicle.

   The cusps of the molar teeth are considerably worn. They show that the individual was about thirty years of age at the time of death. This conclusion is supported by the size of the skull insofar as it can be reconstructed. An interesting peculiarity exists in the fact that the thickness of the bone is equivalent to that of a child rather than that of an adult of thirty years of age. It is concluded that the thinness of the bone of the skull, plus the fact that the teeth are so markedly worn, shows that the individual was suffering from a dietary deficiency. All bones, excepting the clavicle belonged to this individual. The clavicle however, belongs

to a child. No other bones were recovered.

2) Fifteen pieces of slag were found of which nine were fragments of furnace bottoms. An iron ring which may have been a fitting for a horse's harness, was also found.

DISCUSSION: Insofar as it was possible to ascertain from the local people who excavated the site, the thirty year old skeleton was located lying beside the S. wall of Gallery I. The skull, which was not covered by the fill, lay beside the wall while the major portion of the body was beneath the fill. The sequence of events appearing to have taken place at the site in connection with the skeleton is that, first the skeleton was placed with its skull at a distance of about 60 cm. from the W. end of Gallery I and then the site was infilled with soil and refuse which consisted of the remains of metal working activities. As to the reason for the burial here, the author would suggest that the souterrain may have been used as a convenient grave at a time when it no longer served its original function. The presence of only a single bone made it impossible to determine anything concerning the child. Also, none of the "excavators" remembered the find-spot of this bone or its relationship with the other skeletal remains.

ERRATA

In the Duniskey report an error in the drawing occurs in cross-section $J-J_1$. The lower right hand corner of this should not show hatching or the outline of a slope. It should be blank. Also on page 7 in the dimensions column for creepway CH2–CH3 the letters S and N should read W and E respectively.

J. P. McCARTHY.

SPRING OUTING

The Spring Outing took place on Saturday, 19th May. The first stop on the trip was at Darenth Wood, Kent, where Rod Le Gear guided us to the accessible denehole nearby. (see Sub. Brit. Bull. No. 7 p. 3) Those who wished to, descended the steep slope via a rope through a small aperture into the chamber below which is dated to the 13th Century. It is hoped that this structure will be preserved for posterity if the proposed quarrying of the area goes ahead.

It was a warm and sunny day, so packed lunches were eaten on St. Margaret's Downs overlooking the sea.

After lunch several more members from Kent met up with the former party to be guided by Dave Barnes and Jeffrey Farrel round the Western Heights at Dover and Drop Redoubt. This was a most interesting and informative excursion and an article on this site is to appear in a future edition of the Bulletin. Permission for this visit had been obtained from the Department of the Environment and we were given a concession for free entry to the underground workings of Dover Castle which was our next 'port of call'. We had hoped to visit the part of the tunnel system not normally open to the public at large, but this was not possible due to the unstable state of these tunnels and risk of collapse.

One or two people took the opportunity of being in Dover to see the Roman Painted House and as one member said, after such an enjoyable day, "That was the icing on the cake."

THE UNDERGROUND STRUCTURES AT TONG CASTLE

Tong Castle is in the old Manor of Tong in east Shropshire and was the seat of the Lords of the Manor from the 12th to the 19th Century. Excavations at present under publication have revealed five castle buildings in various positions on the present site, with the last Castle, built by George Durant in 1765, being finally demolished for safety reasons in 1954.

The first castle was built on the south western corner of the promontory with walls going vertically downwards to the streams on either side of the promontory. A deep ditch cut across the promontory in the middle of the iste made it very easy to defend.

Subsequent castles extended the area of building with the last castle being built in the centre on the foundations of the late 15th Century brick built castle. The surrounding area was landscaped by 'Capability' Brown for George Durant and included the present Church (or North) Pool, and the former South Pool which surrounded the castle to the south and west.

Apart from the 14th Century well at the north east of the promontory, the largest underground structure is the Ice-house which is 3.5 m. in diameter and 5.8 m. deep, domed at each end with a side entrance, which along with the top of the Ice-house was originally beneath the castle lawns.

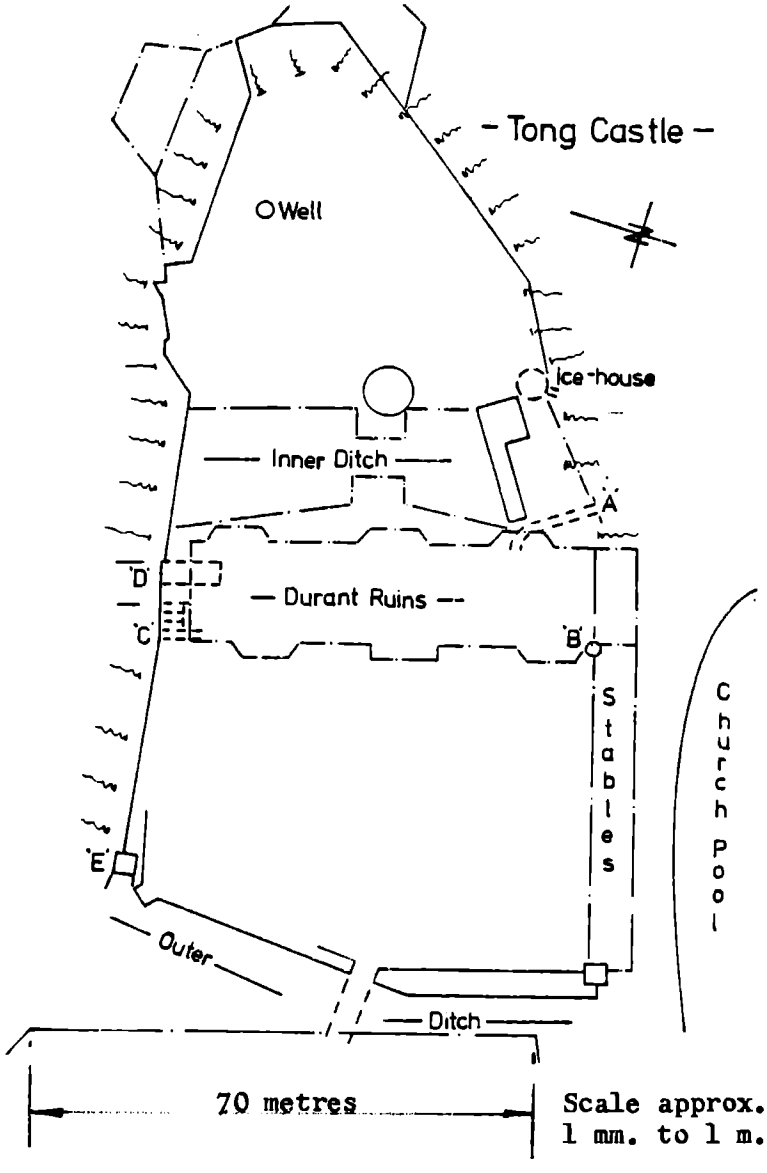
The Ice-house was built in the 18th Century and filled each winter with ice from the South Pool. It contained sufficient ice to keep the food cool for even the lavish entertaining of George Durant's many guests. An underground tunnel linked the Ice-house with the cellars and larders of the castle at 'A' through which the ice could be taken in.

The underground tunnel is partly cut into the natural red sandstone bedrock with a brick arched roof with a small grill for ventilation where the tunnel actually enters the castle walling. Apart from the stairways inside the castle down to the cellars and larders, a spiral staircase of re-used sandstone was built on the ouside of the castle at 'B' and this also provided access to the large stables and coach houses which were built alongside the Church Pool.

The cellars and larders were connected to all parts of the castle by means of arched tunnels. The longest of the tunnels so far located, runs along from the spiral staircase just inside the front of the castle to the exit tunnel at 'C'. A further passage just before the exit runs from the tunnel at right angles into the side of the cellar at 'D'.

The tunnels at 'A' and 'C' are of the late 15th Century building and re-used during the 18th Century with the tunnels modified for additional access points. Alongside the tunnel exit at 'C' are three smaller arches, primarily used for the landscaping of the south side of the castle, but were also made use of for the storage of beer and other household goods.

Beyond these small arches are two large cellars with the first one providing the foundations for the castle outer wall into which was built a flue, which together with the remains of a malt oven, suggest it could have been used during the brewing of beer. The second and largest of the cellars at 'D' was a Wine Cellar, that according to the 19th Century Sale Brochure, was capable of holding 360 dozen bottles of wine ! Both cellars are cut deep into the bedrock with a brick arched roof and in the corner of the Wine Cellar is an unfinished well or soakaway cut about one metre deep into the bedrock. From its position in the corner and the sterile sand fill, it would appear to be earlier than the cellar possibly belonging to the 15th Century castle building and cut from the original ground level.



A passage in the side of the Wine Cellar goes up stone steps, behind the other large cellar and the small arches to join the exit tunnel at 'C' and the passageway is currently filled with the later demolition rubble.

It was therefore possible during the 18th Century for the servants to move and live completely underground during the day, while George Durant entertained his guests in the castle. With very little light or ventilation in the damp airless tunnels and cellars, and using only oil lamps or candles, it must have been a miserable existence for them.

The earlier use of the tunnels in the 15th - 17th Century had a completely different role and along and below the south outer walling from exit 'C' is the base of a watch tower forming an underground chamber at 'E'. The chamber was originally brick built with brick rib vaulting and apart from the doorway, which faces south, the only light into the chamber is from two narrow squint

holes which look down the outer wall. The door opened inwards and apart from a small alcove, possibly for a reading lectern and oil lamp, the walls are bare. The use of the chamber has been the subject of much speculation for it gives the impression of being a secluded cell with an inconspicuous access along the walls of the castle. This access could have been for different purposes during the Civil War when the castle was under seige and it would have been possible to have traversed the castle below ground without being seen. The chamber was partly damaged during the Civil War and was subsequently re-built in the late 17th Century as part of an Italianate garden laid out to the south and east of the castle. It was damaged further to facilitate the landscaping needs of 'Capability' Brown, though fortunately, much was left standing. Following the recent large scale clearing of the south wall, it now stands proud once more on the corner of the long wall.

The date of the original tunnels have always been placed as being of the late 15th Century when the brick castle was built, but excavation and clearance in the Wine Cellar/landscape arch area has located an earlier set of steps which could produce another period of use for the underground passageways.

ALAN WHARTON
Director of Excavations
Tong Archaeological Group.

CARN EUNY - TRISTAN AND ISOLDE IN A CORNISH FOGOU ?

In Gottfried von Strassburg's Tristan romance (c.1210) the German poet claimed to have 'known since he was eleven' the Cornish cave in which Tristan and Isolde take refuge during their exile from King Mark's court although he had never set foot in Cornwall (see Gottfried von Strassburg, Tristan, with the 'Tristan' of Thomas, translated by A. T. Hatto, Penguin Classics, p. 266.) Apart from his own youthful experiences Gottfried can only mean that he felt he knew the cave from the description he found in his French source text, the Tristran of the Anglo-Norman poet, Thomas. Most of Thomas's poem is now lost including the description of the cave and its surroundings and can only be reconstructed from the derivatives of Thomas's romance. The most accurate of these is the Norwegian prose Tristramssaga (1226) written by a cleric, Brother Robert, for King Haakon IV and his court at Bergen. Translated into English, the description of the Cornish site reads:

> "They found a secret place beside a certain water and in the hillside, that heathen men let hew and adorn in olden time with mickle skill and fair craft, and this wall all vaulted and the entrance dug deep in the ground and there was a secret passage running along below the ground. Upon the house lay much earth and thereon stood the fairest tree upon the hillside, and the shade of the tree spreading abroad gave protection from the sun's heat and burning. By the house was a spring with clear water and round the water grew the sweetest herbs with fair blossoms that men might choose, and a stream ran from the spring toward the east. When the sun shone upon the grass it smelled with the sweetest smell, and the water was all as it had been mixed with honey for the sweetness of the herbs..."

(emended from the English translation by R. S. Loomis, The Romance of Tristram and Ysolt by Thomas of Britain, N.Y., 1951, p. 177 - 8).

Just as Gottfried apparently felt that he 'knew' the strange cave from Thomas's account, I too had felt for many years that I almost 'knew' the cave from the description in the Tristramssaga; and yet the main structural features of

this man-made cave built in pagan times were so peculiar that I was never able to form a clear image of this composite structure until one day I opened the pages of Drive Magazine (A.A. publication) and found before me the 'secret of an Iron Age Settlement', and illustration of the long passage of the fogou at Carn Euny, near Brane, Cornwall. These fogous, were artificial structures, made by digging a deep, wide channel through the soil, roofing it with stone slabs and then concealing the work with earth. (taken from Treasures of Britain, Drive Publications Ltd., for the A.A.). A fuller definition is given in the Ordnance Survey Map of Southern Britain in the Iron Age (ed. 1967) p. 16: "Fogous (or fougous), which occur in Cornwall, are underground structures or passages formed by excavating a trench, revetting the sides with stone, imposing a roof of stone slabs, and covering the whole with earth again. They are found in association both with open sites and with forts...", both their origin and their use are uncertain. From a defensive point of view they would be death traps to their occupants, and they may conceivably have been underground storehouses like those referred to much earlier by Pytheas - though, if so, they were strangely designed for the purpose. A distribution of similar structures extend also to Ireland and Scotland (where they are known as 'earth houses') and they continued in use into the post Roman period.

On a brief holiday to Cornwall I made my way up to Carn Euny, where the custodian of the site, excavated under the direction of Mr. P. M. Christie for the Department of the Environment (report will be published in the Bulletin of the Institute of Archaeology. University of London, Vol. 16. London, 1979.) allowed me to explore the fogou. My feeling of 'deja vu' grew as I discovered not only a long passage (over 60 feet (18.28 m)) but a circular vaulted sidechamber (c. 15 feet (4.57 m) in circumference) and a precipitously steep and narrow creep-hole, leading down from the ground surface to the beginning of the long passage and now considered to have been originally the only way of entering the fogou. As far as one can ascertain, the corbelled circular chamber seems never to have been completely closed to the sky in the centre of the dome but originally roofed by some kind of timber and turf construction. The idea that Thomas's description of the 'cave' accords with the description of a fogou is supported by the other derivatives of his romance, notably by the Middle English Sir Tristrem (late 13th Century):

> "In on erthe house thai layne," (l.2478) and the reference to a secret passage, (l.2489-90):
> "thai hadden a dern gat, that thai no man told."

It is worth noting too that all the major derivatives of Thomas's poem have retained his rhetorical treatment of the setting of the cave as a 'locus amoenus' or Earthly Paradise. The traditional elements are easily recognised: the site on a hill, the shady tree, the spring with healing water, the sweet herbs and a stream running from the spring towards the east. Yet this too reveals a hidden dimension; for the fogou at Carn Euny is sited on the slopes of the hill crowned by Caer Bran, within 100 yards (91.44 m) of the fogou lies the celebrated well at Chapel Euny from which there flows a stream. In the 19th Century local people knew it as 'the Giant's Well', cf. Sir Tristrem, (l.2480-1):

> "Etenes bi old dayn/ Has wrought it, with outen woug"

It had been built by giants in olden days. The destroyed fogou at Higher Bodinar, is known locally as the Giant's Holt, likewise the fogou at Lower Boscaswell, both of these located on the Land's End Peninsula, West Penwith. Indeed practically all the known fogou sites are confined to the Land's End district.

Carn Euny - Tristan and Isolde in a Cornish Fogou ? (Cont'd)

The original purpose of the Cornish fogous has yet to be determined. Few, if any, burials have been found in them. No doubt some of the simpler structures were used for storage purposes but a relatively elaborate one, such as the one at Carn Euny, cannot have been designed for that purpose alone. The function of the niches at either side of the creep-hole at Carn Euny and the larger niche or aumbry in the wall of the circular chamber, facing the doorway, is not clear. At the east end of the fogou is a thresh-hold stone, maybe a stumbling block intended to warn the inmates of the fogou of the approach of an intruder. A similar stumbling trap is to be found at the entrance to a small side-chamber in the extensive complex at Halligey, Trelowarren. Finally, at the main entrance to the fogou at Boleigh is an enigmatic figure carved in bas-relief, believed to represent a deity, seemingly not carved in situ but brought from some sacred grove. The possibility that some of the more elaborate fogous may have been used for ritual purposes as pagan shrines cannot, then, be completely ruled out, although so far no cult objects have come to light, but if these were of wood, as known examples frequently are, they would have perished long ago.

Suggestions for further reading:

CLARK, Evelyn	Cornish Fogous, Methuen, 1961
THOMAS, Charles	Rural Settlement in Roman Britain, 'The Character and Origins of Roman Dumnonia' in CBA Research Report 7, London, 1966.
CHRISTIE, P. M.	Subterranea Britannica Bulletin No. 1, 'A Brief Outline of the Distribution and Characteristics of British Souterrains ... Royston, 1975 pp. 7 - 8.
CHRISTIE, P.M.	Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society, 'Carn Euny', Vol: 44 Cambridge, 1978.
CHRISTIE, P.M.	Bulletin of the Institute of Archaeology. University of London, Vol: 16, London 1979.
HARRIS, S. C.	Romania, tome 98, 'The Cave of Lovers in the Tristramssaga and related Tristan Romances', Paris 1977, pp. 306 - 30 and 460 - 500.
	Current Archaeology, No. 44, pp. 262 - 8, 1974
	Cornwall Archaeological Society Field Guide 2 (14th ed.) 1969.

N.B. A stylised version of the ground plan of the fogou at Carn Euny appears on the front cover of each Subterranea Britannica bulletin.

SYLVIA HARRIS

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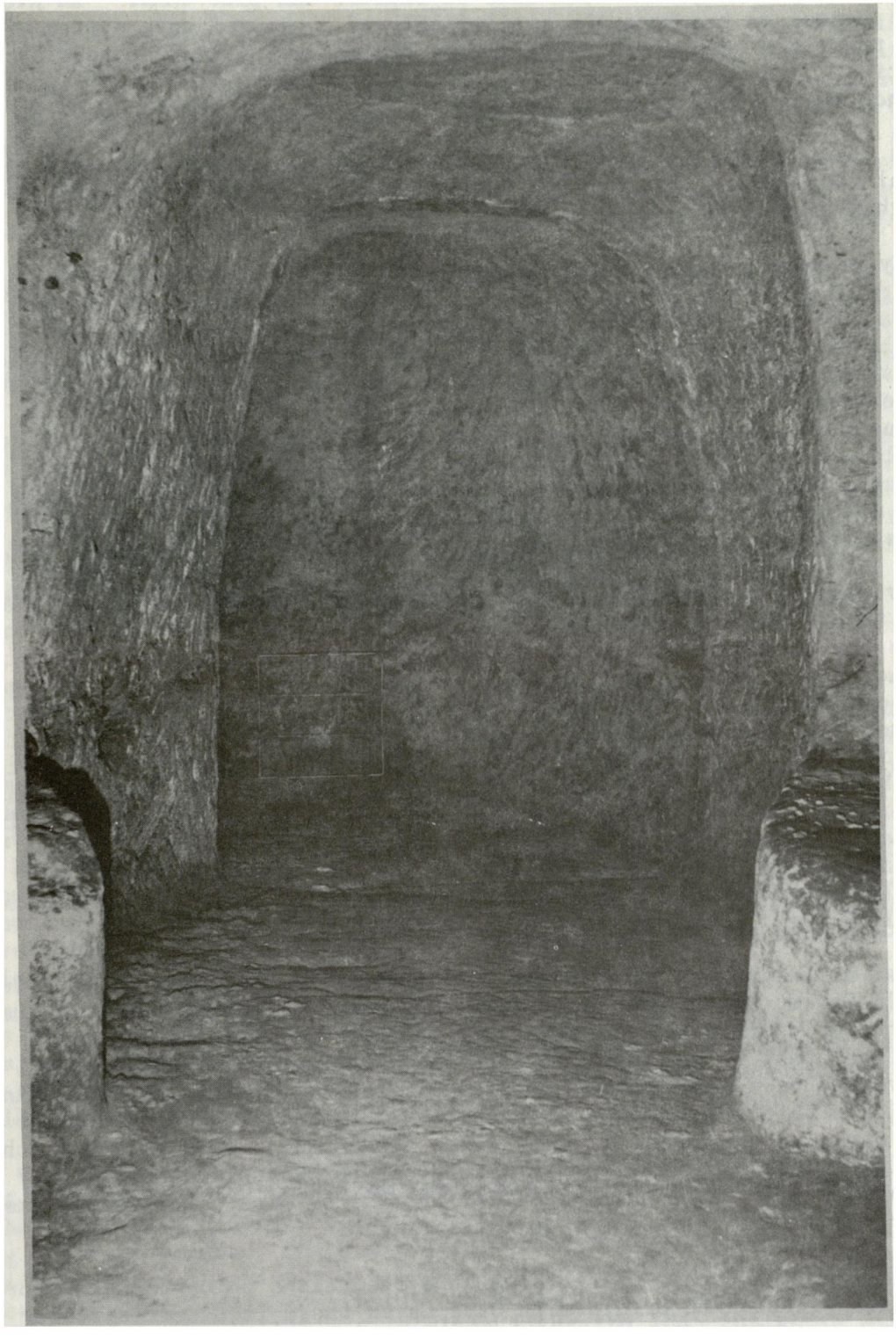

Scale: 18 inch. square divided into 6 inch sub-squares.

Photographer: Paul Nix.

NOTTINGHAM CAVES - A PERSONAL COMMENT

Nottingham has always been renowned for its caves but it is only in recent years that any attempt has been made to explore and plot them. An even more recent phenomenon has been the availability of a cleared cave system where guided tours for the general public have become a very popular tourist attraction. Having taken visitors round from time to time, it is obvious that much that we now take for granted comes as a surprise for others.

Perhaps then, it may be useful to make some general comment and exercise some personal theories in what is, hopefully, one of a series of articles about Nottingham Caves.

The City of Nottingham is built on an outcrop of Bunter Sandstone which lends itself readily to the hewing of caves. They are all entirely man-made and in no way resemble the natural caves created by water action in limestone. It is therefore possible to walk about in them (once they have been cleared of deposited rubbish) and the proportions are human, with ceiling heights rarely exceeding eight or nine feet (2.43 m. or 2.74 m.). The Bunter Sandstone weathers very badly and unlike the Old Red Sandstones is of no use for building purposes. Admittedly the sand produced when cutting out a cave is a usable by-product, but one must assume that this was regarded as a bonus and was not usually the primary reason for cutting into the rock and we believe that the caves were built specifically as cellars or for industrial use.

It is evident from close observation of those cave systems which have been cleared that a continuous process of altering, enlarging and adapting for new purposes has taken place in most of them. In fact it is very difficult in some places to determine what the original looked like. One can perhaps recognise that modifications have occurred, but it is not so easy to decide the sequence of the modifications, because each one has in its turn destroyed the outline of its predecessor. One would probably also need to know the use for which the cave was being modified to understand the need for the change and unfortunately, the evidence for that is removed by each successive incumbent. The manner in which these alterations can be recognised is often in the tool marks, which can differ in various sections of the cave, and the change frequently coincides with a change of direction in a wall, a break in the curve of a ceiling, or the removal of a rock cut bench or thrall.

Particular attention was paid to the tooling in the early days of clearing the Drury Hill Caves, which took place from 1968 onwards, because much of the fill was so obviously nineteenth or twentieth Century in origin, not to say unstratified, that it was hoped to date the construction by other means. This idea proved to be a non-starter, as it would have been necessary to begin by dating a cave before being able to ascribe the tooling to any particular era ! The tool marks in the caves do repay close attention. They vary from the comparatively crude 'hacking' patterns through to meticulous 'pecking'. The first probably made by an adze-like tool or miners' pick; the second executed by hammer and chisel, giving a decorative finish.

I would suggest that these differences lend themselves to certain interpretations. For instance, within the Bridlesmith Gate Caves there is a semi-circular cave of elegant proportions with much of the tooling applied neatly and apparently the work of one man. At some time a passage was cut through from this cave into one adjoining. Here in the passage, the tool marks are completely different from those in the cave, not only in the way they lie, but also because the workmanship is so much more crude. It has not been possible so far to date the original cutting of the cave, because the rub bish in it post-dates the building of the property above, nor can we be sure when the alteration was made, but it is not unreasonable to suppose that the unaltered cave was medieval and contemporary with an earlier building. When the present eighteenth Century

building was erected, the adjoining cave ceiling was cut through in places to permit a brick built foundation wall down to cave floor level and was further modified by the blocking of a doorway into a third cave, which made it necessary to cut out the afore-mentioned passage.

The caves which we have reason to suppose are earlier than the fifteenth Century in origin appear to have certain features in common. The walls merge into the roof in a continuous sweep, corners are rounded and the roof domed. Central pillars supporting the roofs of the larger caves are carved to achieve a decorative effect, even with moulding at the point where the capital springs out from the column. All this work is typified by a careful attention to detail, the tooling is neat, decorative in itself and suggestive of a mason who is a master of his art and well accustomed to working with this material.

There are exceptions, of course, but it seems that there is a case for suggesting that some of the more recent tooling is coarser, the construction tends to an angularity which is much less aesthetically pleasing and I for one get the impression that a jobbing builder has been called in to get the job done as quickly and as cheaply as possible.

A further implication is that the 'Master Mason' was employed by a wealthy person who wanted the best and could afford to pay for well proportioned store-rooms etc., under his property. Later, (but just how much later one wonders) the caves were adapted for different use and who is to know, if the shoddier workmanship was due to lack of funds or lack of interest in the appearance of the less public portions of the establishment ?

Within the old city boundaries we know that the rock is honeycombed with caves. Many of these contain a well, dug down twenty to thirty feet (6 m. - 9.1 m.) through the rock to the water table. Another curious feature is that when the modern cave plan is superimposed onto the earlier editions of the Ordnance Survey map there is a close relationship to property boundaries and the entrances, even now, reflect this fact. In the fifteenth Century or before at the time when the earliest known caves were cut there could have been no shortage of space at ground level so this cannot have been a factor. On the other hand, timber houses require regular attention and many would have to be rebuilt at least once in a man's life-time. Perhaps then, there was some merit in constructing permanent rooms underground which would require minimal maintenance and were capable of adaptation to different usage without the necessity of obtaining further building materials.

Perhaps it is as well to bear in mind that neighbouring geological strata only a few miles away yield coal (at Wollaton to the west) and alabaster (at Gotham to the south west). Both these areas were being worked contemporaneously with the building of the caves thereby establishing a tradition for mining.

Beyond the medieval town boundary there are two further types of cave. At the foot of the Castle rock and in the region of St. Mary's Church, caves were cut into the cliff face and used for industrial purposes such as wharves, brewing, tanning and fish ponds. Under the Common Fields to the north of the town there is one known location where sand was extracted by mining, but this must have been a later development which continued until comparatively recent times, coming to an end when building took place after the 1845 Enclosure Act.

Our researches so far have done little to shed light on the more abstract aspects of caves so it behoves me to make it clear that the foregoing remarks are not necessarily endorsed by other members of the Nottingham Arts Society. In so general a treatment of the topic no references have been quoted for information about the surface features is common to many books on the history of Nottingham. The caves themselves will be the subject of proper report, now in preparation.

MAUREEN MAHONY